

CBS EVENING NEWS

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COSTA RICA/  
PLANE CRASH

KURTIS: The Pentagon has not committed on reports that four Americans were killed in an air crash last week in Costa Rica near the border with Nicaragua. News reports in both countries claim the DC-3 was carrying arms to anti-Sandinista rebels.

CENTRAL AMERICA/

KURTIS: In Washington, word that the U.S. is involved in

U.S. AID

the mining of Nicaraguan harbors is causing concern that a direct combat role lies ahead. Robert Schakne has the story.

SCHAKNE: Direct United States involvement in the armed conflict in Central America is now becoming more apparent. U.S. officials confirm that the CIA directly controls the mine-laying operation against Nicaragua's two principal seaports, Corinto and Puerto Sandino. The CIA has stationed a small freighter off Nicaragua's Pacific coast. Americans are in charge aboard the freighter, dispatching small boats with Latin American crews to carry the mines to the seaports. At least five foreign cargo ships have been damaged by the mines. France and England have protested, and on Capitol Hill some who support covert operations against Nicaragua say this new tactic is going too far. MOYNIHAN: It's a widening of the conflict to involve other nations, many of which are allies, most of which are friends. That was wrong, and in my judgment, is illegal and has to be stopped.

SCHAKNE: The American role in building and using combat bases in Honduras is also growing. U.S. Army reconnaissance planes now fly from Honduras to keep track of left-wing rebels for the Salvadoran army, and the Pentagon has proposed building two contingency bases in Honduras for use by U.S. Army and Air Force combat units if they're needed. But Defense Secretary Weinberger denies the administration plans to intervene with combat forces. WEINBERGER: ...and you plan for the kinds of things that you may have to do and for...

SCHAKNE: Robert Schakne, CBS News, Capitol Hill.